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L E T T E R

TO HIS GRACE THE
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

H. Wilson B. Y
RICHARD LORD BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

D
A NEW EDITION.

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Printed by P. BYRNE, No. 35, COLLEGE-GREEN.

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M,DCC,LXXXIII.

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ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

RICHARD LORD TESSLER

A NEW EDITION

BY THE REV. J. H. TESSLER

LONDON: PUBLISHED BY J. H. TESSLER

AND SONS, 15, N. B. ST.

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L E T T E R, &c.

MY LORD,

YOUR Grace, by consecrating me a Bishop, has not increased my zeal to serve the cause of Christianity, but you have afforded me a better opportunity of doing it than I could possibly have had as a private man; for this address, which it might have been thought great presumption in me to have offered before, may now, I hope, be presented to your Grace, without my incurring the imputation of intruding into matters not appertaining to my situation in life.

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It would be doing great injustice to your Grace's well-known candour and regard for every thing respecting the good of the Church, to entertain the least doubt of your giving an unprejudiced attention to what I have to offer; but to conciliate a similar attention from minds less liberally disposed, it may be necessary to declare, which I now do, in the most solemn manner, that I have no private view, direct or indirect, in what I am about to propose: nor is the matter now hastily conceived by me, in consequence of my promotion, nor introduced from a silly vanity of being looked upon as a Reformer; a character which in all ages has met with as much detraction as praise; but it has long dwelt upon my mind; I have revolved it in various ways, I have canvassed it in conversation,

on, *inter Sylvas Academi*, with men of disinterested probity, true Christian simplicity, and excellent erudition; and from the most serious conviction of duty, I am emboldened to make the attempt of promoting, as in my conscience I am persuaded, the interests of the Christian Religion, and the true dignity of the Established Church.---These, it may be said, and it is truly said, are but different expressions for the same thing; for there can be no true dignity in any Church Establishment, except what is derived to it from its being the most useful means of inculcating the religion of Christ. Without taking upon me to find fault with other modes of Church Government, I profess an unfeigned regard for our own, and should be as ready as any man in opposing any attempts to subvert it, not from

any mean attention to its emoluments,
but from a firm persuasion of its utility.

I know not whether it may be worth while in this place, to take notice of a paltry censure, which is sometimes openly, often covertly, always, I trust, unjustly passed on the Zeal which the Clergy profess for the Church Establishment; it is said to be a zeal resembling that of *Demetrius*, the Clergy are suspected of crying up the Establishment, lest the *craft* by which they have their livelihood should be *set at nought*. Sordid and illiberal imputation! The Clergy of England have a zeal for the Church of England, but they have a greater zeal for the Church of Christ: There are few of them, I hope, who would scruple professing a wish, that the pure banner of the gospel may,

may, if need shall so require, be displayed triumphant on the ruins of every Church Establishment in Christendom. What if there was no Establishment?—Those who are now bred to the Church, would apply their money, their time, and their talents in some other way: and there are few ways, in which they might not be able to procure for themselves, and for their families, as good, or a better provision, than they at present derive from the Church. We see, in the course of every century, a great many ample fortunes accumulated, and obscure families ennobled, by the profession of the Law, by the Army, by the Navy, and by Commerce; but it is a rare thing indeed, to see a Churchman, in consequence of his profession, lifting his posterity above the common level, either in rank or fortune.

tune. And yet there can be no presumption in supposing, that men brought up to the Church have as sound understandings as those who are brought up to the Bar; the same industry, genius, or ability of any kind, which contribute to place a man on the Bench of Bishops, might, if they had been directed into another channel, have placed him on the Bench of Judges; and he whose head is covered with an Archiepiscopal Mitre, might have been adorned with the more substantial and permanent honours usually conferred on a Lord High Chancellor.—But to return.

Let me intreat your Grace not to suffer the mere term *Innovation* to alarm your apprehension, either for the peace of the Community, or the safety of the Church

Church Establishment; the writer would have thrown his pen into the fire, and his proposals after it, if there had been the most distant tendency in them to disturb either. I know it is commonly said, that wise and good men look upon every attempt to reform what is amiss, either in Church or State, as a matter of dangerous tendency: but it may be justly doubted, whether there is not as much timidity as wisdom, as much indolence as goodness in this caution; certain I am, that if *Luther* and the Reformers had been men of such dispositions, the Church of Christ would never have been purged in any degree, by them at least, from its Antichristian corruptions. The medical maxim, *Malum bene positum ne moveto*, merits the observance of the Physician of the Body Politick, as well as of the Body Natural.

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---I readily acknowledge that it does so:
 ---but when the Evil, though unobserv-
 ed, is really rankling in the heart, deprav-
 ing the noblest parts, and insensibly un-
 dermining the whole constitution, it is
 the business of them both, unless they
 will be deemed bunglers, to accomplish
 its removal, "My son says *Solomon*,
 fear thou the Lord and the King, and
 meddle not with them who are given to
 change."---Agreed again:---God forbid
 that either your Grace or I should meddle
 with them who would wish us to change
 our fear of God into impiety; our rever-
 ence for the King and Constitution, into
 Anarchy and Rebellion. But there is
 neither Sin nor Shame, I apprehend, in
 meddling with those who would wish to
 make such little change in the Church
 Establishment as would, with the bless-
 ing

ing of God, produce a great change for the better in the faith and manners of the whole community.

To keep your Grace no longer in suspense as to the meaning of this address, I have two proposals to make to you; one respects the Revenues of the Bishops; the other those of the inferior Clergy; both of them tending to the same end;—not a parity of preferments, but a better apportioned distribution of what the State allows for the maintenance of the established clergy.

To begin with the Bishopricks—It would be an easy matter to display much erudition, in tracing the history of the Establishment of the several Archbishopricks, which now subsist in England and
Wales;

Wales; but as the investigation would tend very little, if at all, to the illustration of the subject we are upon, I will not mispend either your Grace's leisure or my own in making it. Whatever was the primary occasion of it, the fact is certain—that the Revenues of the Bishopricks are very unequal in value, and that there is a great inequality also in the Patronage appertaining to the different Sees. The first proposal which I humbly submit to your Grace's deliberation, is the utility of bringing a Bill into Parliament—to render the Bishopricks more equal to each other, both with respect to income and patronage, by annexing part of the Estates, and part of the preferments of the richer Bishopricks, *as they become vacant*, to the poorer.—Your Grace will observe, that here is no injury proposed to

to be done to the present possessors of the richer Bishopricks; let them enjoy in peace the Emoluments which their great deservings, or great good fortunes have procured for them; and as to that disappointment of expectation which some men may suffer, it is of too vague a value to be estimated, it is too strange a species of property to be valued at all. Before your Grace's mind can suggest to you the difficulties of accomplishing such a design, or the other objections which may, probably, be made to it, allow me to point out some of the Advantages, which I think would certainly attend it.

1. By a Bill of this kind, the poorer Bishops would be freed from the necessity of holding Ecclesiastical preferments *in commendam* with their Bishopricks; a
practice

practice which bears hard upon the rights and expectations of the rest of the Clergy; which is disagreeable to the Bishops themselves; which exposes them to much, perhaps, undeserved obloquy, but which certainly had better not subsist in the Church. I do not take upon me to fix the precise sum which would enable a Bishop, not to pollute Gospel Humility with the Pomp of Prelacy, not to emulate the Noble and Opulent in such luxurious and expensive levities as become neither Churchmen nor Christians; but to maintain such a decent establishment in the world as would give weight to his example, and authority to his admonition; to make such a moderate provision for his children, as their father's mode of living would give them some little right to expect; and to recommend his religion by works

works of charity, to the serious examination of unbelievers of every denomination. The Sum requisite for these purposes admits of great latitude; some would think that it ought to be more, others that it ought to be less than the Salaries of the Judges; but the revenues of the Bishopricks, if more equally divided, would, probably, be sufficient to afford to each Bishop a sum, not much different from a Judge's salary; and they would do this even supposing that it should be thought right, to make no defalcation from the present incomes of the two Archbishopricks. But whether the Incomes of the Bishops should, by the proposed alteration, be made a little greater or a little less than those of the Judges, still would they be sufficient for

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the purpose of rendering *Commendams* wholly unnecessary.

2. A second consequence of the Bill proposed, would be a greater independence of the Bishops in the House of Lords.---I know that many will be startled, I beg them not to be offended, at the surmise of the Bishops not being independent in the House of Lords; and it would be easy enough to weave a logical cobweb, large enough and strong enough to cover and protect the conduct of the Right Reverend Bench from the attacks of those who dislike Episcopacy. This I say would be an easy task, but it is far above my ability to eradicate from the minds of others, (who are, notwithstanding, as well attached to the Church Establishment as ourselves), a suspicion, that

that the prospect of being translated influences the minds of the Bishops too powerfully, and induces them to pay too great an attention to the beck of a Minister. I am far from saying or thinking, that the Bishops of the present age are more obsequious in their attention to Ministers than their Predecessors have been, or that the Spiritual Lords are the only Lords who are liable to this suspicion, or that Lords in general, are the only persons on whom expectation has an influence; but the suspicion, whether well or ill founded, is disreputable to our order; and, what is of worse consequence, it hinders us from doing that good which we otherwise might do; for the Laity, whilst they entertain such a suspicion concerning us, will accuse us of Avarice and Ambition, of making a gain of Godliness, of bartering

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ing the dignity of our Office for the chance of a translation, in one word of —Secularity—; and against that Accusation they are very backward in allowing the Bishops or the Clergy in general, such kind of defence as they would readily allow to any other class of Men, any other denomination of Christians, under the similar circumstances, of large families and small fortunes. Instead then of quibbling and disputing against the existence of a Minister's influence over us, or recriminating and retorting the petulance of those who accuse us on that account, let us endeavour to remove the Evil; or, if it must not be admitted that this evil has any real existence, let us endeavour to remove the appearance of it. A Bill of the kind here proposed would be effectual to this purpose. For though it might
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be difficult to render the Revenues of the different Sees precisely equal to each other; though it might be proper that the Bishops of such laborious Dioceses as *London, Lincoln, and Chester*, should be somewhat better provided for than those of *Durham, Winchester, and Ely*; since it is a maxim of Scripture that the labourer is worthy of his hire, and of common sense that the hire should be proportioned to the labour; though this, I say, might be proper, yet the disparity of Income and Patronage might be made so small, or so apportioned to the labour, that few Bishops, unless for local considerations, would be disposed to wish for translations; and consequently would, in appearance as well as in reality, be Independent.— But in rendering the Bishops independent, you will reduce the influence of the

Crown in the House of Lords.—I do not mean to deny this charge; nay, I am willing to admit it in its full extent; and as this admission may operate on the minds of some good men, as a solid Objection to the plan itself; and may afford matter of secret slander, or open calumny against the proposer of it; I will trespass upon your Grace's patience with a short, but at the same time with a full and sincere explanation of my opinion on that head; for I should think myself utterly unworthy the favour I have received from his Majesty, and the sacred Office to which I have been appointed, if either fear of offending, or expectation of pleasing, or any other consideration on earth, could influence me to disguise my sentiments, on any subject of civil or religious Importance. With respect then to the
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ence of the Crown, here alluded to, I have considered it in the following manner:

In the embarrassing situations of private life, we all acknowledge the propriety, and feel the utility, of consulting, not humble and pliant dependents, but sensible and independent friends: when our own understandings are distracted by doubts, heated by resentment, instigated by ambition, depressed by despair, or deranged and distempered by the violence of any affection, the advice of an honest, independent, and dispassionate friend, is of the greatest use; it may often, at the moment of its being given, be very unpalatable, but it is always salutary, and we seldom fail to repent the not having taken it. It is the misfortune of men in ele-

vated situations, that they seldom meet with friends who will speak plainly to them, or attempt to stop their career of folly or extravagance; the fear of offending cramps the disposition for advising; many a great estate has been foolishly dissipated, many a fair character undone, by the timid forbearance, the interested acquiescence of expecting dependents; which might have been preserved intire and unsullied, by the firm remonstrance of an honest friend. This observation is certainly as applicable to the concerns of public as of private life; the advice of an independent Parliament is as serviceable to the Crown, as that of an independent friend is to an individual. We know by whom it was said, *where no counsel is the people fall: but in the multitude of Counsellors there is safety*; and

we know too, that the wise king who said it, would have said no such thing, had he suspected that an external influence, rather than an internal conviction, would have rendered his multitude of Counsellors all of the same mind. The principles of those who have spoken against the influence of the Crown, have been either much misunderstood, or much misrepresented; they have been accused, by sly innuendos, of designing to ruin the constitution by lowering the prerogative; of wishing to introduce the most tyrannous (in my apprehension) of all Governments, a Republic, in the room of a limited Monarchy. For my own part, and I verily believe I am far from being singular in my notions, I take this opportunity of publicly declaring to your Grace, what I have a thousand times before

fore declared to my friends in private, that I never entertained the most distant desire, of seeing either the Democrati- cal, or the Aristocratical scale of the Constitution, outweigh the Monarchical; not one jot of the legal prerogative did I ever wish to see abolished; not one tittle of the King's influence in the State to be destroyed, except so far as it was extended over the deliberations of the Hereditary Counsellors of the Crown, or the Parliamentary Representatives of the people. I own I have wished, and I own (with a heart as loyal as the loyalest) that I shall continue to wish, that an influence of this kind may be diminished; because I firmly believe that its diminution will, eventually, tend to the conversation of the genuine constitution of our country; to the honour of his Majesty's

Majesty's Government; to the stability of the Hanover succession; and to the promotion of the public good. Had the influence here spoken of been less predominant of late years; had the measures of the Cabinet been canvassed by the wisdom, and tempered by the moderation of men exercising their free powers of deliberation for the common weal, the brightest jewel of his Majesty's crown had not now been tarnished; the strongest limb of the British Empire had not now been rudely severed from its parent stock. I make not this remark with a view of criminating any set of Ministers, (for the best may be mistaken in their judgments, and errors which are past should be forgotten, buried in the zeal of all parties to rectify the mischiefs they have occasioned) but simply to shew, by
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a recent example, that the influence of the Crown when exerted by the *Cabinet*, over the *Public* Counsellors of the King, is a circumstance so far from being to be wished by his true friends, that it is as dangerous to the real interests and honour of the Crown itself, as it is odious to the people, and destructive of public liberty; it may contribute to keep a prime Minister in his place contrary to the sense of the wisest and best part of the community; it may contribute to keep the King himself unacquainted with his People's wishes, but it cannot do the King or the State any service. To maintain the contrary is to satyrize his Majesty's Government, it is to insinuate that his views and interests are so disjoined from those of his people, that they cannot be effectuated by the uninfluenced

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ed concurrence of honest men. It is far beneath the character of a great and an upright Monarch, to be suspected of a desire to carry any plans of Government into execution in opposition to the Sentiments of a free and enlightened Parliament; and the Minister who should be base enough to advise him to adopt such an arbitrary system of Government, or should supply the corrupted means of carrying it on, would deserve the execration of every man of integrity, and would, probably, sooner or later, meet with the deserved detestation of the Prince himself. It is of such Men as these---there is no impropriety I hope in borrowing truth from tragedy, since *Chrysoptom* is said to have slept with even *Aristophanes* under his pillow;

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it is of such men as these the Poet
speaks,

It is the curse of Kings, to be attended
By slaves that take their humours for a warrant;
And who, to be endeared to a King,
Make no conscience to destroy his *honour*.

In a word, if there be any one mea-
sure more likely than another to pre-
serve pure and unblemished the ho-
nour of the Crown; to secure its
most valuable rights; to procure for
it warm, bold, determined friends,
who in the hour of danger would
support it at the hazard of their
lives against foreign or domestic in-
sult; I verily believe it to be, the estab-
lishing, as much as possible, the inde-
pendency of the several Members of

both

both Houses of Parliament. If I am wrong in this opinion, I should be glad to be set right, my mind I trust is open to conviction, and disposed to follow truth wherever it may be found; but whilst this is my opinion, your Grace may be assured that I cannot admit the circumstance, of the Bishops being rendered independent in the House of Lords, as any real Objection to the plan proposed; on the contrary, I think it a very strong Argument in its favour; so strong an one, that if there was no other, it would be sufficient to sanctify the measure. The Bishops have, on trying occasions, been fast friends to the Crown; they have, on trying occasions also, been fast friends to the liberties of the people; and they would not, in
my

my humble opinion, become worse friends to either King or People, from their being rendered independent of them both,

3. A third probable effect, of the proposed plan, would be a longer residence of the Bishops in their respective Dioceses; from which the best consequences might be expected. When the temptations to wish for translations were in a great measure removed, it would be natural for the Bishops, in general, to consider themselves as settled for life, in the Sees to which they should be first appointed; this consideration would induce them to render their places of residence more comfortable and commodious; and an opportunity of living more

more comfortably, would beget an inclination to live more constantly in them. Being wedded as it were to a particular Diocese, they would think it expedient to become, and they would of course become better acquainted with their Clergy; and by being better acquainted with the situations, prospects, tempers, and talents of their Clergy, they would be better able to co-operate with them, in the great work of amending the Morals of his Majesty's subjects, and of feeding the flock of Christ. It is the duty of Christian Pastors in general, and of the principal Shepherds particularly, *to strengthen that member of the flock which is diseased, to heal that which is sick, to bind up that which is broken, to bring again that which is driven away,*

away, and to seek that which is lost:
 that these and other parts of the pastoral office can never be so well performed, as when the Shepherd is resident in the midst of his flock, can admit of no question. The manners of the English Bishops are (I trust I speak rightly—I am certain I mean not to speak flatteringly) as pure and irreprehensible as those of any other Prelates in Europe; and as the world in general lives more according to fashion than reason, it is not easy to conceive what beneficial influence the Examples of the Bishops, residing in their Dioceses, and letting their light shine before men who would be disposed to observe it, would have on the lives and conversations of both Clergy and Laity.

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I have long considered the Clergy who are dispersed through the kingdom, as a little leaven preserving, from extreme corruption, the whole mass; and the great kindness and respect, with which the whole order is treated by the best and most enlightened part of the Laity, is a proof that they consider them in the same light. Your Grace's candour and moderation will excuse me, if in this commendation I include the Dissenting Clergy, whom I cannot look upon as inferior to the Clergy of the Establishment, either in learning or morals. It is owing principally to the teaching and example of the Clergy in general, that there is not more infidelity in the highest, more immorality in the lowest classes of the community;

munity; but there would, probably, be less of both, if we were all of us, in the words of Bishop Burnet addressed to George I. "obliged to live and to labour more suitably to our profession." It may be urged, that the attendance of the Bishops in the House of Lords, is inconsistent with the residence here spoken of--- in no wise---; a longer residence does not imply a continual residence; in the course of the year opportunity enough may be found to let the State have, on important occasions, the benefit of their Advice; and their Dioceses, on most occasions, the benefit of their inspection; and they will be best able to judge for themselves where, at any particular time, their presence will be of most use.

Some

Some, I doubt not, will be ready enough to think, that the State would receive little injury by the perpetual absence of the Bishops from the House of Lords.--I see no reason for thinking, that it would not receive as much injury from the absence of six and twenty independent Spiritual Peers, as from the absence of an equal number of Temporal Peers of any order. The Bench of Bishops is composed, either of the younger branches of Noble Families, or of Men who are sprung from what the old Barons would call no Ancestry; but why should it be thought, that the understandings of either of these sorts of Men, are a whit inferior to those of the Temporal Lords? The Bishops of Noble Blood have, unquestionably, had as good opportunities of mental improvement; and have,

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probably, made as proper an use of them, as their elder brothers, uncles, or cousins have done; and it would be a miserable affectation of modesty, a base adulation of the Nobility, to admit, that the plebeians who have raised themselves to the Bench, are inferior to their honourable or right honourable Brethren, in learning or sagacity,¹ in judgment or integrity, in any one qualification requisite to constitute a Man an useful Counsellor, in concerns Ecclesiastical or Civil.

I have now briefly mentioned some of the advantages which would attend the proposed change in the values of the Bishopricks, and endeavoured to obviate what some will be inclined to think main objections to the making it. As to the difficulties which might attend the
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execution of it, they are neither many nor great, I profess that I see none, but what might easily be overcome, without doing the least injury to any one, by the good sense and the good temper of a Committee of Spiritual and Temporal Lords, invested with full powers to make proper inquiries, and heartily disposed towards the business. To enter into a description of particulars, when there may be a chance that the general outline will be disapproved, would be equally irksome to your Grace and to myself: if I had leisure, I should want inclination, to spend more of my time than is necessary in delineating a scheme, which either the more comprehensive wisdom, or the more efficient prejudices of other men, may quash at once, by pronouncing it useless, impolitic, or impracticable.

The second thing which I have to recommend to your Grace's attention is the introduction of a Bill into Parliament---For appropriating, *as they become vacant*, one third or some other definite part, of the Income of every Deanery, Prebend or Canonry, of the Churches of Westminster, Windsor, Christchurch, Canterbury, Worcester, Durham, Norwich, Ely, Peterborough, Carlisle, &c. to the same purposes, *mutatis mutandis*, as the First Fruits and Tenths were appropriated by the Act passed in the fifth of Queen Anne. Dignities which after this deduction would not yield one hundred a year, should not I think be meddled with.---If any one, in the outset of this inquiry, should be forward to object; that many of these Preferments, being in the Patronage of the Crown, ought not to

to be lessened without his Majesty's especial consent; let such an one know, that there is no wish to lessen them without that consent; but this consent, we are certain, will not be withheld if the proposal shall appear to his Majesty to be for the credit of the Church, and the good of his Subjects; and God prevent its taking effect if it will not be for both.

This proposal will, I am sensible, be very differently received by different sorts of men: some will consider it as an attack upon the Hierarchy, as tending to lower the Church Establishment; others will think that it does not go far enough, they will prefer levelling to lowering, the abolition of Deans and Chapters to their reduction. So much
may

may reasonably be said on both sides, that I cannot, on this occasion, stop to say any thing on either side; and my business indeed, is not so much with Deans and Chapters, as with a very useful, with what some will not scruple to call the most useful part of the Clergy--the Parochial Clergy. The general provision for this class of men, is so exceedingly scanty and mean, that there surely can be no impropriety in wishing, that it may be increased; especially when the increase is proposed to be made, without either reclaiming any part of the Church Property, which was by strange means enough conveyed into Lay hands; or imposing any new burthens on the community in general; or taking from any one of the Clergy

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the least part of what he is at present possessed of.

The Revenue of the Church of England is not, I think, well understood in general; at least I have met with a great many very sensible men, of all professions and ranks, who did not understand it. They have expressed a surprise, bordering on disbelief, when I have ventured to assure them, that the whole income of the Church, including Bishopricks, Deans and Chapters, Rectories, Vicarages, Dignities and Benefices of all kinds, and even the two Universities with their respective Colleges, which being Lay Corporations ought not to be taken into the account, did not amount, upon the most liberal calculation, to 1500000 l. a year. I will
not

not trouble your Grace with the manner of making this calculation, but I have good reason to believe it to be near the truth, it is certainly near enough for the inference which I wish to draw from it, which is simply this,—that if we had no Bishops to inspect and govern the Church; no Deaneries, Prebends, or Canonries to stimulate the Clergy to excel in literary attainments; no Universities or Colleges (which with all their faults are the best Seminaries of Education in Europe) to instruct our youth; nothing but Parochial Clergy, and all of these provided for by an equal partition, notwithstanding the great inequality of their merits, of the present Ecclesiastical Revenues, there would not be, estimating the number of the Clergy at ten thousand, above 150l. a year
for

for each individual. I would not be understood to affect a mathematical precision in this matter, the subject would admit it, but the present *data* are not sufficient to enable any person to make it; but whether we suppose an officiating Minister to have 120l. or 150l. a year, it is a sum not much to be envied him, Apothecaries and Attornies, in very moderate practice, make as much by their respective professions; without having been at the same expences with the Clergy in their Educations, and without being, like them, prohibited by the laws of their Country, from bettering their circumstances, by uniting to the Emoluments of their professions, the profits resulting from farming or any kind of trade.

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I do not introduce these remarks, in this place, with any intention of finding fault with the State, for its not having made a better provision for its Clergy; but merely with a view of rectifying the misconceptions, removing the prejudices, and lessening the envy of many, otherwise well-disposed persons, towards the Church establishment. The whole Provision for the Church is as low as it can be, unless the State will be contented with a beggarly and illiterate Clergy, too mean and contemptible to do any good either by precept or example, unless it will condescend to have Taylors and Coblers for its Pastors and Teachers. There are several, no doubt, who looking upon the Christian religion as an imposture, and the Clergy
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as an hive of hypocritical drones, would be willing enough to assist any needy minister in plucking from the Church a part or the whole of its possessions, provided by such a plunder they could preserve their own from depredation; with these men I cannot argue, not because they are not Christians, but because they are as ignorant of the Science of Government as of Christianity; and it is the less necessary to enter into any discussion of their principles, as they are not likely to be adopted by any minister, who understands the use of religion in enforcing morality, and the use of good morals in securing the welfare of the community; but if any short-sighted minister, in order to serve a turn, to stop some rotten hole in
his

his administration, should be found hardy or silly enough to adopt them; we may be well persuaded that the King and Parliament would have wisdom and goodness enough to check his folly and counteract his designs; they would say to him in the Language of the late Lord Chatham-----
 “ the Church (God bless it!) has but a pittance.”—Nor is this pittance itself to be enviously regarded, as the hereditary property of any particular class of people, it does not belong to the Tribe of *Levi*; we none of us lay claim to any part of it in consequence of our being descended from this or that family. The property of the Church is the real property of those who at present possess it, but it may be esteemed the reversionary property of every family in the Kingdom;
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it is somewhat that every man has a title to, over and above that which he can produce his Parchments for. Look at the possessors of Bishopricks, Deaneries, Prebends, Rectories and all the other Emoluments of the Church, and you will find them descended from the Nobility, the Gentry, the Commonalty, from all ranks, professions, and orders, of the State. I say again the property of the Church ought to be considered as the property of the Kingdom at large; I do not mean, inasmuch as it is a part of the Kingdom which is given to the Church by the common or the statute Law of the Kingdom; but as the individuals who enjoy it, are or may be, in a succession of years, taken from every family in the Kingdom.

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But though the whole Revenue of the Church is so inconsiderable, as not to admit any diminution of it; yet a somewhat better distribution of it might be introduced with much, it is apprehended, advantage to the State, and without the least injustice to any individual. I know some men who are of opinion that it would be useful to the State to reduce all the clergy, as nearly as possible to the same level, both in rank and fortune: I wonder that they do not think it would be useful to the State, to reduce all the Officers in the Navy and Army, to the rank and income of Lieutenants and Ensigns. But Doctor *Bentley* has so well considered this subject in his *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis* that I cannot do better than quote the

the passage---“ As for the Cheapness [of the Priesthood] that appeared lately in one of your Parliaments ; when the accounts exhibited shewed, that 6000 of your Clergy, the greater part of your whole number, had at a middle rate one with another not 50l. a year. A poor emolument for so long, so laborious, so expensive an education, as must qualify them for Holy Orders. While I resided at *Oxford*, and saw such a conflux of youth to their Annual Admissions ; I have often studied and admired, why their parents would under such mean encouragements design their sons for the Church ; and those the most towardly and capable and select geniuses among their children ; who must needs have emerged in a secular Life. I congratulated

tulated indeed the felicity of your Establishment, which attracted the choice youth of your nation for so very low pay: but my wonder was at the Parents, who generally have interest, maintenance, and wealth, the first thing in their view: till at last one of your State Lotteries ceased my astonishment. For as in that, a few glittering prizes, of 1000, 5000 and 10000 pounds among an infinity of blanks, drew troops of adventurers, who, if the whole fund had been equally ticketed would never have come in: so a few shining Dignities in your Church, Prebends, Deaneries, Bishopricks, are the *pious fraud* that induces and decoys the Parents, to risk their children's fortune in it. Every one hopes his own will get some great

great prize in the Church, and never reflects on the thousands of blanks in poor Country Livings. And if a Foreigner may tell you his mind from what he sees at home; it is this part of your Establishment that makes your Clergy excel ours. Do but once level all your Preferments, and you will soon be as level in your Learning. For instead of the flower of the *English* youth, you will have only the refuse sent to your Academies; and those too cramped and crippled in their Studies for want of Aim and Emulation, so that if your Free-thinkers had any Politicks, instead of suppressing your whole order, they should make you all alike." In this passage Doctor *Bentley* appeals to some accounts, which had been exhibited to Parliament,

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probably by the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty, stating the great number of small Livings. It may not be improper to bring to your Grace's recollection what some other eminent men have said on the subject.

Bishop *Kennet*, in his *Case of Impropriations*, quotes a petition, drawn up by the direction of Archbishop *Whitgift*, to Queen *Elizabeth* in the forty-third year of her reign, in which there is the following clause—" of eight thousand eight hundred and odd Benefices with Cure, there are not six hundred sufficient for learned men." What the Archbishop thought sufficient for a learned man does not appear in this place, but it appears in another, that he did not think 30l.

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de claro, was enough even in his time, "seeing the tenth part of the Benefices are not severally competent for a mean person, nor the twentieth part estimated to be worth 30*l. de claro*, this restraint [of Pluralities] will deprive the far greatest part of Learned Ministers of sufficient maintenance." A great many livings have been much improved since the reign of Elizabeth; but the improvements have principally been made in Rectories; the Vicarages have many of them been rather diminished in value, in consequence of the change which had taken place in the value of money; for many of them have little or no Endowment, except a fixed payment out of the Tythes, which, on the dissolution of the Monasteries, came into the hands of Lay or Spiritual per-

sons—Doctor *Warner* in the Appendix to his Ecclesiastical History, published in 1757 has the following observation—
 “ of the nine thousand and some hundred Churches and Chapels which we have in England and Wales, six thousand—I speak from the best authority—are not above the value of forty pounds a year.”—Lastly, Doctor *Burn*, has stated the number of small livings, (in his Ecclesiastical Law, Article First Fruits and Tenths) in the following terms—
 “ the number of Livings capable of augmentation hath been certified as follows; 1071 livings not exceeding 10l. a year; 1467 livings above 10l. and not exceeding 20l. a year; 1126 livings above 20l. and not exceeding 30l. a year; 1049 livings above 30l. and not exceeding 40l. a year; 884 livings above
 40l.

40l. and not exceeding 50l. a year. So that in the whole there are 5597 livings certified under 50l. a year." There is some difference in these last two accounts, as to the number of livings under 50l. a year, but let us take which account we please, the wretched provision for the Parochial Clergy, may be inferred from it. It is readily acknowledged also, that things are not so bad now as they were when the return of Livings was first made to the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty; in the course of near 70 years a great many livings have been augmented by that Bounty; but the Bounty, assisted by private benefactions, has been found quite inadequate to the end, of making a reasonable provision for the Parochial Clergy in a short time. Dr. *Warner* says on this head, " It will
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be 500 years before every living can be raised to 60l. a year by Queen Anne's Bounty, supposing the same money to be distributed as there has been for some years past." And Dr. *Burn* assures us that, " computing the clear amount of the bounty to make 55 augmentations yearly, it will be 339 years from the year 1714 (which was the first year in which any augmentations were made) before all the said livings can exceed 50l. a year. And if it be computed that half of such augmentations may be made in conjunction with other benefactors (which is improbable,) it will require 226 years before all the livings already certified will exceed 50l. a year."

Enough

Enough has been said concerning the poverty of the greatest part of our Parochial Churches and Chapels; it is a fact not known, I believe, by many of the Laity; felt, however by many deserving Clergy; and lamented, it is to be hoped, by all of us, who have been fortunate enough to obtain better situations in the Establishment; fortunate enough I must be allowed to call it, for there are many amongst the poorest of the Parochial Clergy, whose merits as Scholars, as Christians, and as men, would be no disgrace to the most deserving Prelate on the Bench. The plan I have the honour of presenting to your Grace, would remedy this defect in our Establishment in no long course of years; it would produce a wonderful change for the better, in fourscore or an hundred years, in
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the condition of the inferior Clergy. It would immediately begin to operate for their benefit, though its operation would not be complete, till all those who are possessed of the Dignities in question were gathered to their fathers: thirty or forty years are a long period when considered as a part of the life of an individual, but they are nothing when considered as a part of the existence of a community; no dislike, therefore, should be conceived against the proposal, from its not being instantly attended by its utmost possible utility; that could not be effected, without depriving of their property the present possessors of these dignities; a measure too full of injustice and cruelty to be thought of, except by selfish Enthusiasts in times of public confusion. If the plan is adopted we ourselves shall
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feel its good effects in part, and our posterity will feel them in full perfection. The dignities though thus diminished, would still be great objects to the Clergy, great enough, if properly bestowed, to procure the exertion of the most distinguished talents in the Service of Learning and Religion.

I must not omit taking notice of one Objection which will, probably, be made to this plan: it will be said —That it will be the occasion of too large a portion of the Lands of the Kingdom being held in *Mortmain*.—I should be sorry to be found wading out of my depth; but I will venture to say that I see no foundation for this Objection; and what is more, that I should not see any weight in it, if
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it had the surest foundation. I sincerely beg pardon of the great Luminaries of the law if, in this matter, I am in an error; the reasons which have led me into this error, if it be one, are such as follow.—In the first place, I see no foundation for the objection; because I look upon the landed income of the Church, as not being, at present, equal to one sixteenth part of the landed Income of the Kingdom: and by the proposed change, the landed Income of the Church would not, in four hundred years, become equal to one tenth part of the landed Income of the Kingdom. But we may safely trust our Posterity, with applying their own remedy to an Evil, which will not take place till four hundred years hence.—In the second place I do not see

see that it ought to be looked upon as an Evil, if it had even now taken place. Every one knows that the reasons, which induced our Ancestors to pass Statutes of *Mortmain*, restraining Corporations from purchasing of Lands, do not now subsist in the least degree. *No services that are due of such lands, and which at the beginning were provided for the defence of the realm, are wrongfully withdrawn;* the lands in the possession of Corporations furnish their proper number of hands towards the defence of the State, inasmuch as they pay their *quota* of the public taxes; and the hands which they furnish are neither torpid nor dead, but as full of life and activity as any other hands. Nor is it at this time of day pretended, that any

loss

Loss or damage redounds to the King and the Chief Lords, by lands aliened into Mortmain. But though the primary reasons for passing Statutes in *Mortmain* have long ceased to exist, yet others may have arisen of equal weight and cogency; of such of these as are generally given, the disheirson of heirs, and the rendering lands unalienable are the chief. As to the disheirson of lawful heirs, nothing of the kind can take place in the present circumstance; for a purchase is to be made, and a full and valuable consideration is to be actually paid for the lands, to be annexed to small livings. And as to the lands being rendered unalienable, I profess I do not see how the State can be injured thereby, whilst they continue to pay as much to the State as if they were sold every year;

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and to yield as much annual produce by tillage, and pasturage, as any other lands of equal extent, which I have no doubt that they certainly would do: these lands, more-over, do in fact suffer a species of alienation; upon the voidance of every incumbency they are transferred to a different family: but it may be that I do not see this question in its proper light; or *Mortmain* may be nothing but a bug-bear, which wants only to be examined to be found harmless.

If after what has been advanced, this said *Mortmain* should still be considered as a reason, or adduced as a pretence, against the plan; we may get rid of the objection intirely, and that by two ways, each of which recommends

commends itself by peculiar advantages.

1. By allowing the Clergy to accept of certain payments from the funds, in the place of rents from Lands held in *Mortmain*.—This, I own, is not the best manner of augmenting small livings, but it is better than not augmenting them at all; and there is little probability that, in the utmost necessities of the State, any Minister, would dare to lay his unhallowed hands on the scanty *peculium* of the poorest Clergy. The difficulty of finding proper purchases has obliged, your Grace well knows, the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty, to adopt this mode of Augmentation; and this difficulty would not be lessened, by an increase of the sum of money
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to be laid out. The Governors of this bounty at first allowed the Clergy an Interest of 5l. per cent. till they could find means of laying out the money, which had been allotted to their livings, in the purchase of Lands or Tithes; but within three years after the first Augmentations took place, they informed the Clergy that they would be obliged to lessen the interest they allowed them, and it was accordingly lessened to 4l. per cent. in 1720. This interest has been since lowered to 2l. per cent. with the same motive of inducing the Clergy to exert themselves in looking out for purchases, and there is a large sum of money vested in the funds, and charged with the payment of only 2l. per cent. to the livings which have have been augmented,
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which would be all of it paid to the the respective Clergy, to whom it is due, could they procure proper purchases. But as they have not done this, even in the present price of lands, when they might have made twice as much interest of their money, (for I look upon the money as their property) as they receive from the Corporation, it is fairly to be presumed that they could not do it; and this impossibility, by the bye, of finding purchases, should, I humbly presume, unless there be reasons to the contrary, which do I not understand, be a motive with the Corporation, to consider, whether it would not be equitable and proper, to make such a change in their rules, as would enable the present poor Clergy, whose livings have been augmented, to receive
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the full amount of the benefit intended for them by the Bounty of the Queen.

2. Another way of preventing any more lands from coming into *Mortmain*, in consequence of the plan here mentioned, would be the suffering the Incumbents of small livings to receive from the several Churches, whose Deaneries, &c. are proposed to be diminished, certain annual stipends. Some Deans and Chapters have, with a very laudable disinterestedness, appropriated a tenth or a larger part of their annual fines to the repairs of the fabricks of their Churches; their Treasurer usually deducts this part at their Audits before the dividends are made, and he could with equal facility deduct from the Income of each person, which should in future become liable to such a defalcation, a third or any other any assigned part, and pay it in any

determined proportion (under the inspection of the Bishop of the diocese or other proper person) to the Incumbents of the small livings. By this method not only the objection as to *Mortmain* would be removed; but an objection of full as great danger both to the Church and State---the making the Clergy dependent stipendiary Pensioners of Government, by vesting their property in the funds, would be removed also. But there is still another advantage which would attend this method,---the relief which the poor Clergy would receive from the plan would be very sensibly felt immediately, and the utmost relief which could be ever derived from it, would take place in a short time; for in the space of forty or fifty years, most or all of the present possessors of Deaneries, &c. would be dead. Suppose, for instance, that after passing an act for

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appropriating the third part, of the preferments in question, to the Augmentation of small livings, there should become vacant in the course of the first year, preferments to the amount of 3000 l. a year, then would there be an opportunity of augmenting 50 livings with 20 l. or 100 livings with 10 l. a year each. The following year a certain number more would be augmented, and so on; more or fewer augmentations taking place every year, in proportion to the number of deaths amongst the Dignitaries, and the value of their preferments. The Augmentations from this fund, thus applied, would have their limit; but the operation of the Queen's Bounty in making all the small livings equal to 50 l. a year, would hereby be wonderfully accelerated; and this rapid acceleration is no bad argument in

favour of this mode of distributing the sum proposed.

By either of the two methods here mentioned, the danger of having more lands come into *Mortmain* would be removed; and either of them would quiet also the apprehensions which, in the opinion of many discerning persons, might reasonably be entertained, of the Clergy's acquiring too great an influence in the State. It is certain, that influence accompanies property, and were the Clergy to get a great accession of landed property, their influence would be increased in a great degree. The time was, when the Church possessed a third part of the lands of the Kingdom; when the Clergy were united under one corrupt head, and were actuated by a spirit, very different from the spirit of meek-

meekness and christian simplicity. The present reformed Church of England is as different, I trust, in principles of conduct, from the ancient Romish Church of England, as it is inferior to it in property and influence; and so far am I from blaming any man for his apprehensions of its reverting to its former state, that I sincerely concur with him in thinking that every tendency to it should be sedulously watched, and firmly opposed. But by the last mode, which, every thing considered, may perhaps be the best, of applying the revenues taken from the Deaneries, &c. the Clergy would acquire no additional influence of any kind, for there would be no increase either of the monied or the landed property of the church.

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There is no need to enlarge upon the many publick and private advantages, which would attend the making a better provision for the inferior Clergy; they must be obvious to every person, who will give himself the trouble to think upon the subject. A more strict conjunction concerning residence, and a restriction of pluralities would be neither unreasonable nor unserviceable consequences of it.

In the former part of this letter I declined entering into the particular mode of accomplishing the change there recommended; I must do the same here, and for the same reason. ----- I see no difficulties in effecting the business, if the propriety of attempting it be admitted, but others I am sensible will see many: this is to be expected, for we judge of things according to our dispositions, and these, Nature and Education have rendered

dered infinitely various, between the extreme of Audacity on the one hand, which scruples not to attempt impossibilities; and the extreme of Timidity on the other, which considers the most practicable things as impossible. This I say must be expected in the honest men, who are willing to do what they think ought to be done; but if private reasons should chance to render any person averse from the business, the objections to it will be multiplied beyond number, and the difficulties magnified beyond measure. For as was said by a worthy Senator, when the augmentation of small livings was formerly agitated in the House of Commons ---“to him that is unwilling to go there is always a bear or a lion in the way: first let us make ourselves willing, then will the way be easy and safe enough.” Though I decline at present entering in-

to any particulars, and omit the mention of many things which, if ever the business is proceeded in, must necessarily be taken into the Account; yet I will just give two hints, as each of them may, when properly modified, by a reason commendatory of the plan itself, and that to different Classes of men. 1. It seems highly equitable, that the revenues taken from the Churches, should be first employed in augmenting, to a sum to be fixed upon, the small livings in the Patronage of these Churches; and afterwards to the augmentation of small livings in general. 2. That the sum of four or six hundred pounds (if land is to be purchased) should be added to every two hundred raised by Benefaction; as it is probable, that the prospect of making at once so large an addition to the the income of a small living, would induce both the Patrons, especially

especially those who are possessed of Improvements, and the *young* Incumbents of them, to procure such Benefactions much more commonly than is done at present.

I hasten to release your Grace from the trouble I have occasioned you, requesting you to take in good part, what is proposed with a good intention. The moderation of the present Age in Ecclesiastical Matters is great, when contrasted with the violence of the last; all sides have reason to rejoice at the difference; and I would have wished that the hand which has written this letter, had been chilled with the damp of death before it had begun its work, if I had thought, that the business which is now broached was likely, either in itself, or in its consequences, to be attended with any the least diminution

minution of that moderation, with any the least loss of brotherly love, and Christian Charity. In all disputes whether between ourselves of the Establishment, or between us and our Brethren who dissent from it, the advice of a certain venerable father of the Church demands our attention,—"let us mutually give up a little, that we may receive in return a great deal; Unanimity." This Unanimity in Matters of Opinion can, perhaps, never be obtained, but the want of it may be dispensed with, if there be an unanimity in the practice of mutual forbearance, kindness and goodwill. Having accustomed myself, for years, to look at the subjects here treated of, as of great national importance, and unquestioned utility; it is very probable, that I may have undesignedly considered them with partiality, and overlooked some weighty objections which may be brought against them. If there are any such objections, they will certainly be discovered, and many improvements, probably, suggested, when

when mens' minds are turned towards the Subject; and the wish of having the subject thoroughly discussed, rather than hastily adopted, or hastily rejected, is the sole occasion of my addressing your Grace in this publick manner. If any one should think, that it would have been more respectful in me to have submitted this matter privately to the judgment of your Grace and the Bench of Bishops, I must beg leave to differ from him. I have no disposition to be wanting in respect to any of my Brethren, but I cannot, out of respect to any man or set of men, give up a decided opinion, and I have not the least doubt or hesitation of mind, as to the utility of making the objects of this letter publickly known. If I had previously consulted the Bench of Bishops; I might have run the risk of treating them with apparent disrespect; for I should have been under a necessity of neglecting their advice, had it tended to the suppression of what I now offer to the deliberate and impartial examination of

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of the Laity and Clergy in general. I moreover much dislike all private caballing in matters of public Import; if they will not bear the broad face of day, the animadversion of men of different talents and judgments, the thorough sifting of all parties, they are not fit to be encouraged. It is a narrow policy which would teach us to stickle for any interests which the Laity would not willingly allow us; they are our fellow Christians and have souls to be saved, we are their fellow Citizens and have rights to be maintained, and we are both of us under equal obligations to be fellow-labourers in promoting the welfare of both Church and State; they will have no jealousies if we have no reserves, they will not grudge us a single grain of dignity, a single guinea of property which tends to the advancement of the common weal. The Business thus submitted to the publick judgment, cannot be stifled by the efforts of interest or prejudice: nor will it ever be brought forward by its proposer in any other way; unless publick

lick approbation shall prove that it is calculated for the publick Good. I may not, perhaps, be able to give up my opinion to the opinion of others; but I shall be both able and willing, in deference to their opinions, to give up my plan; for my zeal for rectifying what seems wrong, is tempered, I hope, by a respect for the judgments of others; by a disposition (after having proposed openly and freely what seems amiss) to acquiesce quietly, in what cannot quietly be amended.

As to any censure to which I may have exposed myself in becoming, as some will scoffingly phrase it, a Reformer; in disturbing, as others will, or will seem to apprehend, the repose of the Establishment, I will, as the Apostle recommends, *take it patiently*: it is much easier to bear the reproach of other mens' tongues, than of our own minds; and that I could not have escaped, had I done less than I have done. I flatter myself, however, or rather I have good reason to expect, that many of my
Brethren

Brethern will see the subject in the same
 light that I have done, and will concur in
 recommending it, when the more urgent
 concerns of the State are in some measure
 settled, to the notice of Parliament. And
 from the bottom of my heart I beseech
 both your Grace and them, to weigh the
 matter with great accuracy, and I have no
 doubt that both you and they will then
 give judgment concerning it with great
 Sincerity.

I have the honour to be,

With all possible deference and respect,

Your GRACE'S,

Most obedient Servant,

Cambridge,

Nov. 12, 1782.

R. LANDAFF.

A few copies of this Letter were printed, and submit-
 ted to the perusal of some of the first Characters in the
 Kingdom, in the beginning of last November; it is not
 necessary to trouble the World with the reasons why
 the publication of it has been so long deferred.

March 2, 1783.

